

The most characteristic instrument of the time we are talking about is the Lute; which held a position in social life which has hardly a parallel in our time. It filled the place of a sort of very refined pianoforte, as it was most useful for accompanying simple songs and also very serviceable for the performance of Solos and dances; though in the latter respect its capacities were limited, as it was not capable of rapid execution. It was a more loveable instrument than any we now possess, except perhaps our violins. It was at once a beautiful object to look upon, and a producer of very plaintive and interesting sounds. The delight of artists, and the joy of virtuosos; and in the highest degree a genuine aristocrat amongst instruments. It was extremely difficult to play, and equally difficult and expensive to keep in order. Most people are familiar with the sayings about lutes and the trouble they gave. Thus in

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the often quoted passage from the works of Handel's contemporary friend Malthern(?) "If a lute player to arrives at the age of 80 years you may be sure he has spent 60 of them in tuning. Hardly two per cent of them can tune accurately and there is always something arrives, now with the strings, now with the frets and now with the screws – so they say it costs as much in Paris to keep a lute as it costs to keep a horse." And Mace the well known lutenist of the latter part of the 17th century in England recommends a consideration of its well known delicacy of constitution, that when not in immediate use "You shall do well, even when you lay it by in the day time, to put it into a bed that is constantly used, between the rug and the blanket." (Box and Cox.) It was altogether too delicate a creature to live into rough and ready times of merciless competition like ours, and it's no wonder that it has succumbed to the peculiarly conditions of the modern

“Cosi la tortorella”

Handel has a solo in the Resurrezione with accompaniment for Flute Viola da Gamba and Theorba, and Violins which later only appear at rare intervals.

struggle for life, and practically disappeared without having successor ~~for~~ on the scene of musical experiences. ~~Its very beauties depended for the~~ The only instrument which resembles it in modern times is the little mandolin, whose home now I think is chiefly Portugal, where it holds the same position and social life that the guitar does in Spain. The Lute seems to have come from the East and its name is what remains of the Eastern word Al'ud; which is best perpetuated in the Portuguese "Alaude". It appears early in Mediaeval times, but did not attain to its greatest prominence in the Musical world till the 15th and 16th centuries. It lasted on till late in the 18th century, but the violin and the pianoforte between them gradually reduced its popularity; and the latest publications for it that I have seen quoted is that of 6 Sonatas by Falkenburger(?) which came out at Nuremberg in 1740. ~~But in Bach~~ In the time of Bach and Handel it was on the wane, but both of them paid their tribute to it. Handel paid his compliments by using a large lute called Theorbo in the early Oratorio La Resurrezione – Bach by writing three Suites for it, and by showing traces of the influence

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of the lute style in many of the numbers of his various Suites of the Clavecin. ~~Many of the ornaments~~ Several of the ornaments which pianoforte players are familiar with in his works as well as those of Couperin and such masters of Clavecin writing, are derived from the traditions of the lute. E.g. the glide, which is done just as a fiddler does his glide; with the peculiarity that the string was plucked at the lower point and the finger slipped quickly up to the real note after the beat which it is supposed to fall on. And the fact that players are still taught to begin mordents and similar ornaments on the beat comes from the same cause. ~~That~~ Because the string was not twanged twice or three times to make the shake as ornament, but the resonance of the instrument was sufficient to enable the figure to be heard after one pluck. The influence of the lute upon J.S.Bach is also seen in those curious movements in some of his Suites which are all too low down in the scale such as ~~that~~ the 2nd Gavotte in the "French Overture" which is quite a lute type in every way, and might have

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been actually written for that instrument. The fact that the body of the Lute was too delicate to stand the strain of much tension of the strings made it impossible to get ~~very high~~ extreme sounds out of it - and in the simple lute the tones lay mostly in the middle of the scale. Indeed ~~we should~~ ordinary people would call all music for the lute curiously low; and it had a gently subdued tone about it, as remotely removed from the types of modern popular taste – such as the cornet and the accordion – as it is possible to conceive. If only it had been capable of a little larger range of performance and had not been so troublesome to manage it would have made an ideal domestic instrument. The earliest lute had four strings but in the course of its history the number was constantly added to. ~~In the 16th century there seems to have been as many as 13 strings on a lute, and the scale ranged from about double C to C somewhere about the top line of the G staff.~~

This fine specimen in the S.K. Museum is 5ft 4 long,
and has inscription inside Andreas Tanis(?) in Siena
1621.

Moreover the progress of Music required larger kinds of lutes to be made; especially as they came to be required for accompaniment in theatres, and in these attempts was made to deepen and render more powerful the lower tones of the instrument. From these requirements grew the larger forms of the lute ~~which~~ such as were called in England the Archlute, and in Italian the Archiliuto – and also the Theorbo – which was much the same thing - and the Chitarra - which according to W. Hipkins “is a double necked lute of great length, with wire strings and two sets of tuning pegs, the lower set having twelve and the higher eight strings attached, the unusual extension affording greater development to the bass of the instrument.” In these larger instruments ~~there~~ only the upper set of strings were stopped with the fingers to produce other than the natural sounds of the strings. The lower set of strings were tuned diatonically and plucked ~~open~~

Hip. gives us Gaultier's tuning and says it was adopted in England and France. Used also by Haydn. The old lute tuning was (musical example). Used by Joseph Haydn

like harp strings only for the second notes. The tuning appears to have been altered to suit the keys of the pieces performed; but the general range of the sounds seems to have been from about double C up to somewhere near the top of our stave. In some authorities the scale is given to reach even as low as DDD. The lower D on the pianoforte. The tuning of a Theorbo in Rome in the early part of the 17th century is given as follows [MS stave with notation for tuning]. The writers on lute matters such as Mace, regarded the Archlute, Theorbo etc as instruments for accompaniment, and the lute pure and simple as a solo instrument. The great body of solo music which has come down to us is for the lute, and it corroborates the view of Mace that we chiefly find Archlutes etc in the scenes and directions for performances of the early Operas and such works. But even then they did not maintain

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their position for long – for as soon as Opera became popular and drew large and frequent audiences a more serviceable and sonorous instrument was required, and the Archlute and Theorbo gave way to the Contrebass Viol and bass Viols and the Harpsichord. The time of its greatest usefulness appears to have been from about 1550 till about 1630 or so. The accompaniment of Peri's Euridice was played by a Gravicembalo a Chitarrone a “Lira Grande e Liuto Grosso”. In the curiously mixed Orchestra which Monteverde used for his Orfeo we find two Chitarroni; in the Orchestra for the certain marriage festivities of Duke Fernando de Medici at Florence in 1589 we find large and small lutes, Chitarroni, Lyres and Mandolas, with Trombones and Cornets and Viols etc. There were numbers of famous players of lute. It was evidently an instrument for a virtuoso. For

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it had many distinguished amateurs it was too difficult for anyone but professionals to excel on. In Paris which became almost its chief home there was a family of Gaultiers who were the representative lute players about the beginning of the 17th century. Denis Gaultier published a very beautiful book of lute music early in the century. Belonged to Duke of Hamilton(?). Snapped up at his sale by the German government. Contains pieces for lute players of moderate ability. Most of them not very interesting. In our own country Dowland of sweet memory was a great lutenist to Christian I of Denmark. And one of the representative lute players and writers about the lute was Thomas Mace born somewhere about 1613. Who wrote a book called Music's Monument published as late as 1676 which contains a vast lot of invaluable information about the instrument, and the music for it.

Viols invented in 15th cent.

Treble Viol or Descant.

Tenor or Viola da Braccio.

Viola da gamba.

Bass Viol or Violone.

The Cornet requires special notice. It was merely a hollow tube, either straight or bent with holes in the sides to be stopped like a penny whistle – the sound was produced with the lips as in trumpets and horns, and was very piercing, harsh and penetrating. Appears to have been in the shape of an animal's horn very often – hence probably the name. Very important instrument from the 14th to the 17th centuries. The Treble of the group of instruments of the Trombone and Trumpet class. In Germany called “Zinken”. Mattheson regrets that they were dying out about 1739. Bach used them under the name of Cornetto to strengthen the upper chorus parts. Gluck also used them.

Popularity of the Virginals or Harpsichords is shown by the enormous quantity of Music written for it. There are several MS collections, of about the end of the 16th or beginning of 17th century. The most famous of which is the collection known as Queen Elizabeth's Virginal book in the Fitzwilliam at Cambridge. This almost certainly did not belong to the Queen as there is a piece in it which was written after her death; but it also contains a large quantity of Music which certainly was written in her reign.

Many shapes and sizes. The Kurzen(?) Zinken, Cornettos used by watchmen and guards of town walls, probably the instrument imitated in Meistersinger. There is a soft one with a narrow bore much praised for its soft and delicate tone – called Stille Zinke. The only lingering survivor is the instrument called a serpent, which is still used in big performances now and then.

Virginals had quick action like Harpsichords. In Henry VIII's time the general name for quilled instruments with keys. ~~Clavichord~~ Queen Eliz Virginal book is a little later than Elizabeth's time. Has music written by Tallis, Bird, Morley, Bull, Phillips. Lady Nevill's book all by Byrde.

Pianofortes not made till 18th century.

Spinets same as Harpsichords in principle but much smaller and set in a different direction to the player.

Tangents were metal pins which pressed against the underside of the string when the note was struck.

O. Gibbons 1583 -1625.

Bull 1563 – 1628 Organist of Antwerp when he died.

Byrd born c. 1538 – 1623.

Elizabeth I 1533-1603.

Virginal book. The book contains 416 pieces; of which a large quantity are dances such as Pavaues, and Galiardes, and Almands and Corantes. Also Fantasias and preludes and a large number of arrangements of Choral movements. Byrd, Phillips, Morley, Bull, Sweelinck, Farnaby. “Lady Neville’s Book” contains 42 pieces by Bird; among them the Battel of which there is an MS in Ch. Ch. Library. The copy was completed in 1591. So it was earlier than the so called Queen Elizabeth book. Also Will Forster’s book dated 1524 78 pieces, and Benjamin Cosgrave(?) book 98 pieces ~~about~~ of a little earlier date.

Clavichords – Clavier sound produced by tangents.
Existed from early days – even before the 15th century.

Harpsichord Clavier 16th, 17th, 18th centuries.

Gravicembali. Clavicembalo.

Used in Cavaliere's work. Clavicords (sic) table shaped. Harpsicords (sic) like the modern grand.

Harpsicord 'inexpensive'. Clavicord very expensive.

Harpsichords in existence as early as the 15th century. Leather jacks used in instruments of 1514 1523. The earliest Harpsichord at S Kensington dates from ~~1574~~ 1523. Made by Basso of Venice 4 ½ octaves. [MS notation of range] The greatest harpsichord makers were the Ruckers of Antwerp – living between 1579 – 1651. Spinnet was like a Virginal. Quills used. Used as early as 1531. Said to have been named after Spinetti who made them with the oblong case.

P 15